CERN COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
PROJECT UPDATE

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Project overview

1. Research phase ✓
2. Audience research report ✓
3. Internal communications plan ✓
4. External communications strategy **Finalising this month**

Key findings

INTERNAL COMMS PLAN

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Provision of information: existing channels

Bulletin
- Need more distinction for 'need-to-know' content
- Demand for content closer to real-time and ability to tailor by interest
- Email notification positive but needs improvement
- Content not always suitable for audiences - could learn from social team
- Archive difficult to navigate

Website
- The Directory is treated as an intranet, but there is not enough consistency in content
- Confusion as to the role of CERN People pages and doubling up of efforts for the online Bulletin

Noticeboards and information screens
- Under-utilised. Could be more, and potentially larger, screens in hot spot areas.
- Would benefit from a rolling feed and could link to Bulletin content
- Confusion as to the process of contributing information

Social media
- Not a primary channel for internal communication

Provision of information: internal objectives

Communications

- Need for greater recognition and cooperation with comms team plans around research results

Health & Safety

- Perceptions of the department among staff and users at CERN need to be improved in order to drive a change in behaviours
- There is lack of interest; incidents are not always reported; people don't behave in an environmentally conscious way; prioritise experiments over human health

Security

- Perceptions of the department among staff and users at CERN need to be improved in order to drive a change in behaviours
- Adherence to driving and parking regulations is a major challenge; lack of respect for security personnel; alumni entitlement; disregard for access passes

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Translation

- Majority of comms content is received in English and periodically
- Translation of website content is not done in a timely manner

Consumption of information

Alumni

The alumni programme is still in a very early stage of development, therefore its specific communications requirements remain relatively unclear. However, a number of key communication considerations have been raised:

- Two previous failed attempts to establish an alumni network, therefore communication of the new one will need to be carefully positioned

- Survey demonstrated strong demand for an alumni programme, but the its launch will need to be communicated broadly and positioned well in order to ensure a critical mass of active members is engaged as early as possible. Tracking down ex-alumni will be a challenge

- The types of information suggested to be desired by alumni includes: news and events at CERN; news and events within the particle physics community; job vacancies at CERN; life at CERN (such as Arts at CERN); CERN clubs. A lot of this information is already available but it needs to be funnelled for the alumni audience

- There is an opportunity for the alumni to put information *into* the network, as well as to consume information provided by CERN, but it is not yet clear how or what they will contribute.

Consumption of information: CERN staff

Staff

It was suggested that internal communications should ultimately perform two core functions:

1. To create a sense of community
2. To make individuals' lives easier

- Currently a lot of information is shared informally, by word of mouth
- Information about anything impacting local traffic was a significant priority
- Demand for non-scientists to hear about research but needs to be presented differently
- One-page approach to print / digital summaries
- 'Big Brother' perception of central communications

- Content demand:
  - The work of different departments
  - Satellite activities such as hackathons
  - Local community
  - 'Big picture' at CERN

Consumption of information: CERN users

New users

- 43% of those surveyed reported that they did not feel very well informed about working at CERN and staying the local area

- The type of information most important to receive:

1. Accommodation
2. CERN access information
3. Transport information
4. Health and safety information
5. Updates on research at CERN
6. News about forthcoming CERN events and seminars

Consumption of information: CERN users

Current and returning users

- The Courier is more widely read than the Bulletin

- Over half of all users surveyed never read the print Bulletin, and only 14% read it more than six times a year

- The main way users currently receive information about CERN while working there are:
    1. Email
    2. Word of mouth
    3. The CERN website
    4. Notice boards, posters or digital screens on site

- The most important types of information for users to receive are:
    1. News about events and seminars happening at CERN
    2. Official CERN news (such as operational dates etc.)
    3. Updates on CERN research

- Going forward, email was significantly the most popular channel for receiving all types of information, followed by notice boards, posters and display screens in most instances

- The majority would like to be able to tailor the type of information they receive

Key recommendations

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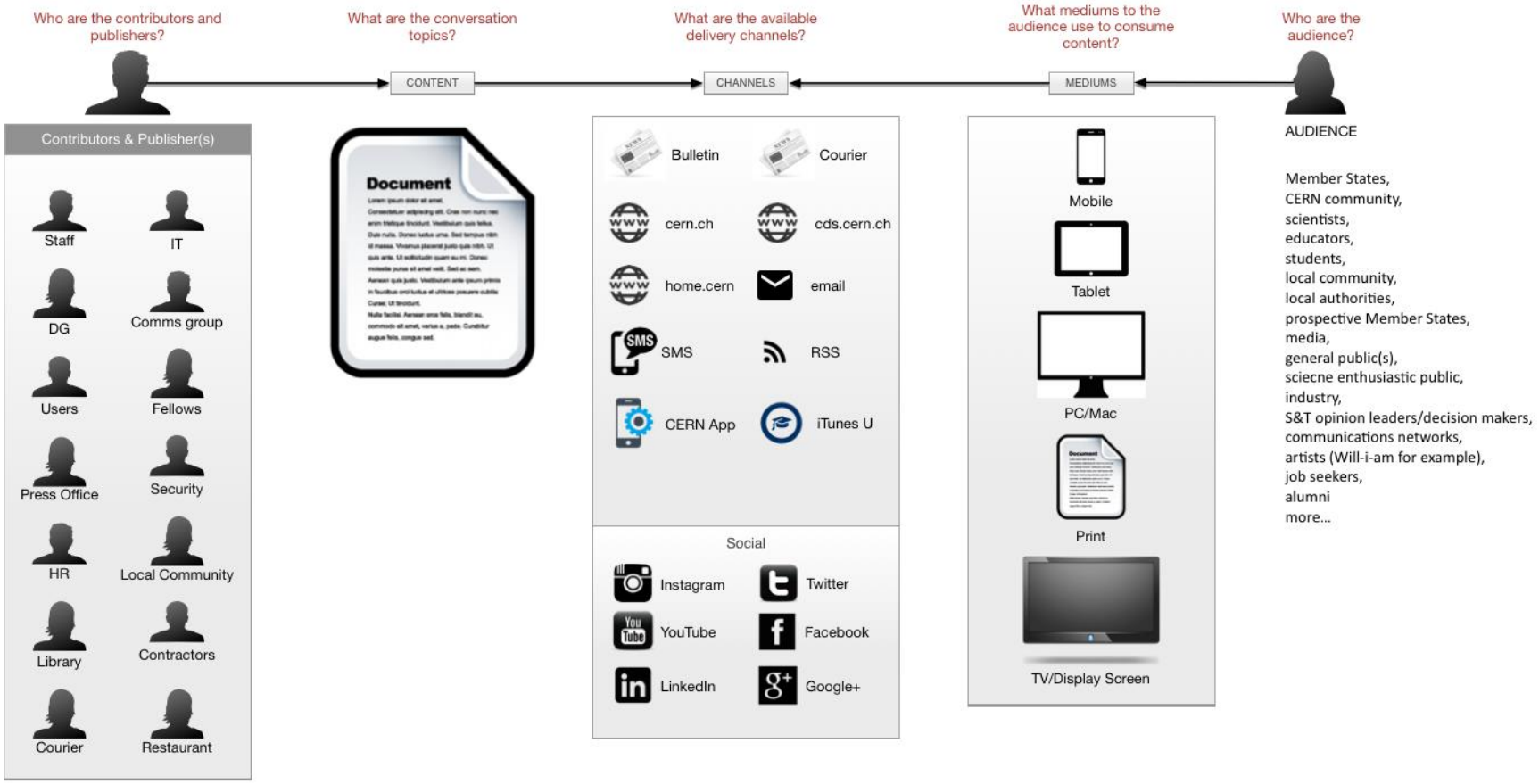
Current CERN communications ecosystem



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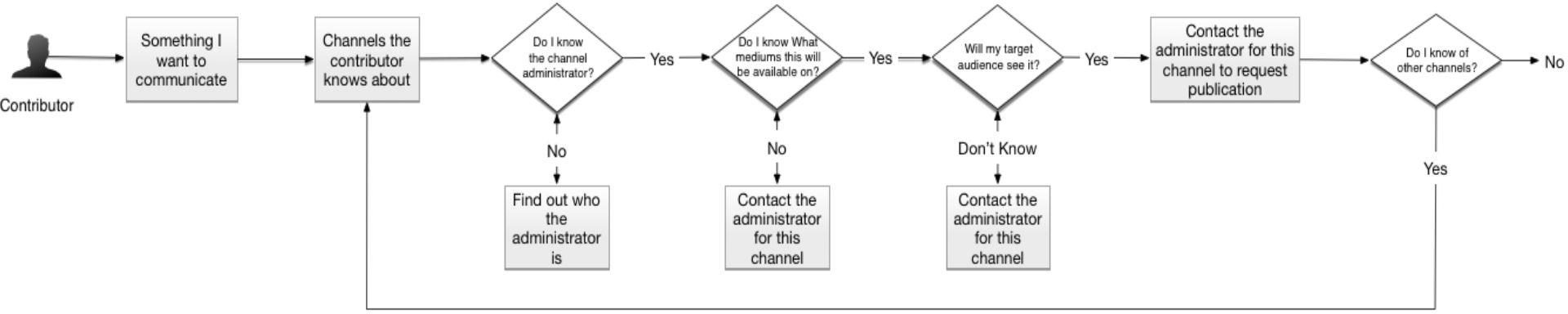
Current CERN communications user journey



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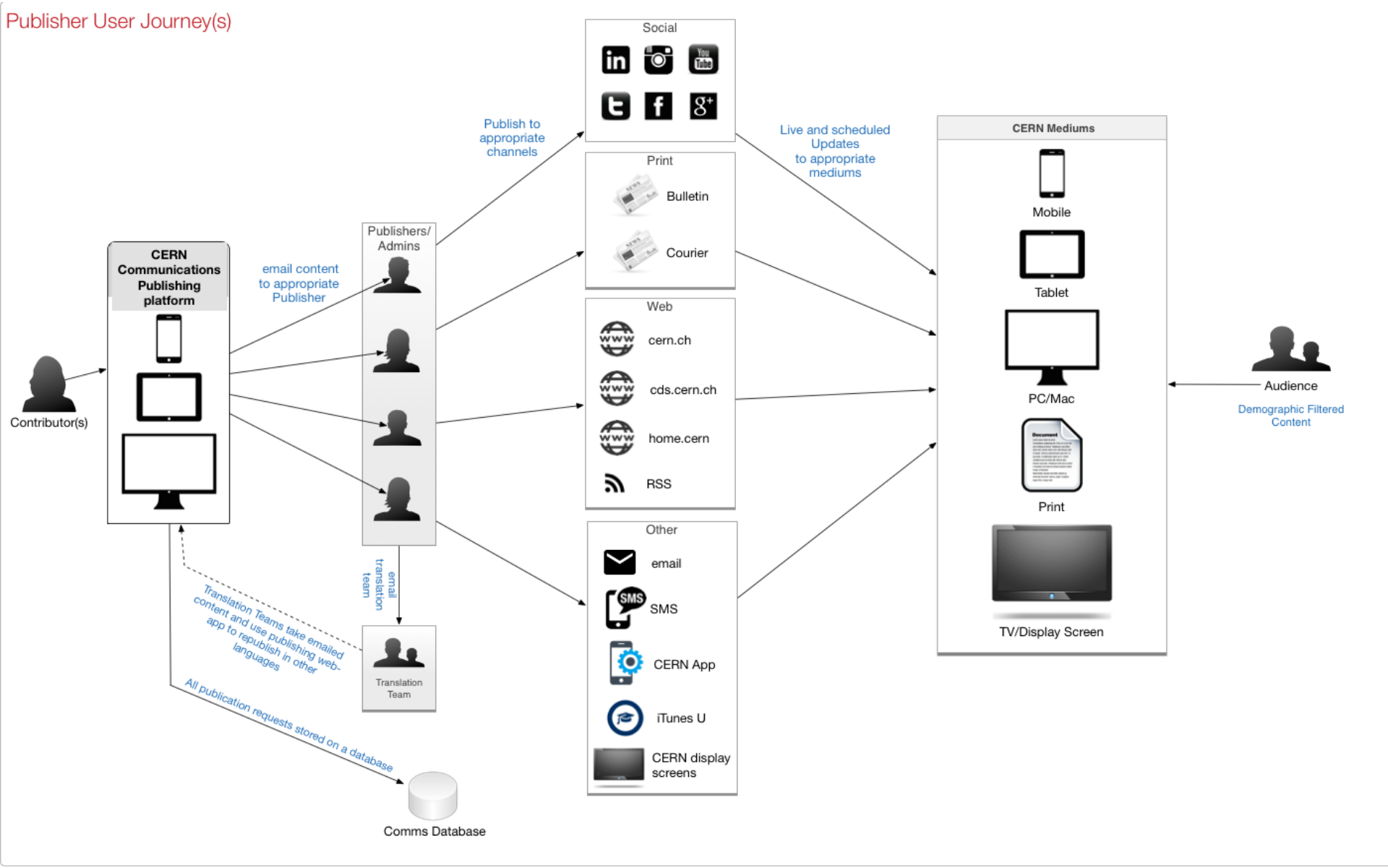
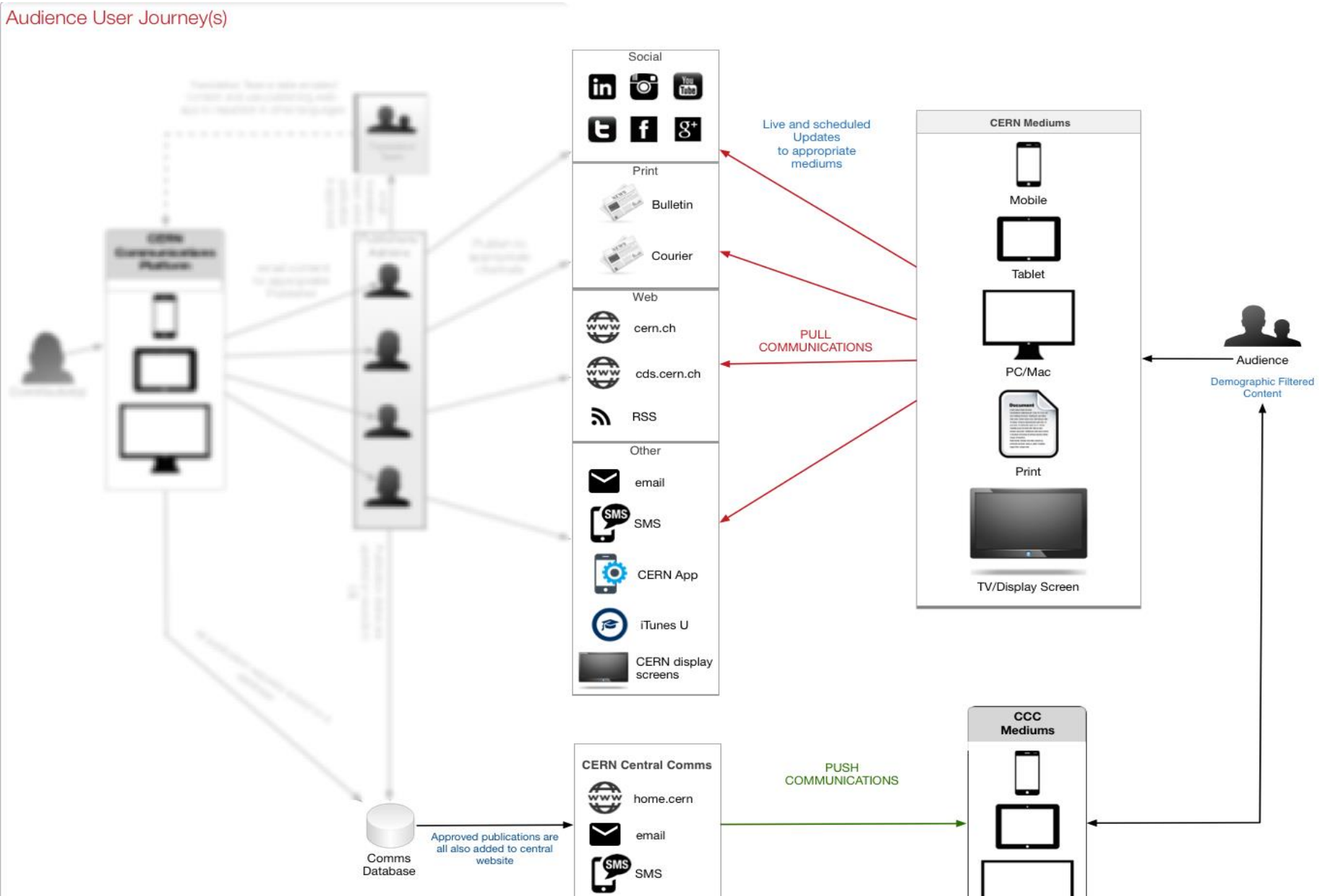
Recommended CERN communications user journey

Recommended CERN communications model - publisher



Recommended CERN communications model - audience



Recommendations – in summary

Infrastructure

Contributors and Publishers: The CCP (CERN Communication Publishing platform)

Audience: The CCC (CERN Central Communication platform)

Recommendations – in summary

Content and delivery

The evolution of the Bulletin

Website – CERN Directory is already as a first port of call and this should be harnessed and content made more consistent from across all departments

Optimise use of noticeboards and screens at CERN

Best practice and excellence in social media

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External communication considerations Snapshot

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External communications – additional research

- EPPCN questionnaire responses
- Interviews with senior members of the science community
- CERN directorate and communications team
- Desktop research
- Meetings with local stakeholder groups

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Objectives

- Help to ensure the long term future of CERN and it's ambitious future projects
- Secure current members and attract new ones
- Be a non-politicised advocate for science
- Build further links with industry
- Guidance on messaging for global landscape of science

The heart of the matter

Overall Comment

- CERN's dissemination of science results and its networks for doing so generally work well

- This should be supported and maintained – CERN is first and foremost a fundamental research facility

- However extra capacity should be added to develop and disseminate content that talks more about CERN's impact on everyday life and the economic impact of the people it trains and businesses it supports

Challenges and solutions

- A lot of people communicate about CERN and on it's behalf.

This must be embraced but there must be at least clear direction, guidelines and policies from the centre

- CERN by it's very nature is ambitious and even some within the community think it's proposals are unrealistic in terms of future funding

Be stronger in disseminating the utilitarian impact of CERN alongside (not instead of) it's contribution to fundamental science

- CERN has finite central resource for communication – a lot of which is taken up by reacting to requests, firefighting and disseminating science results

Add extra capacity for proactive campaigns, enable networks and encourage member states to install communicators in-house

Current Communications Architecture

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Draft positioning

Current Positioning:

CERN is a unique place where fundamental research unites people from all over the world to push the frontiers of science

Draft New Positioning:

Scientists at CERN make discoveries that explain the nature of the universe and transform our everyday lives

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Top line strategic communications recommendations and findings

- New “impact” campaign content should be developed including the input of member states to influence policy makers and general public

- The EPPCN and Interactions networks work well – they should be maintained and there is no benefit in setting up new networks

- The policy of welcoming media to visit CERN should be maintained despite the fact it is a drain on the resources of the press team

- Where possible the existence of “in-house” communication officers from member countries works well

Top line strategic communications recommendations and findings

- We should strive for the best co-ordination between CERN communications and the experiments
- More effort should be made to create bespoke content for policymakers
- CERN has a relatively large social media following more effort should be made to take advantage of this by creating shareable content in terms of infographics, video etc
- CERN website should be changed so that CERN People is external facing – highlighting the activities of people at CERN. myBulletin should be used as bespoke internal comms

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